

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----105160 222042Z /41
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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 746
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 4 TEL AVIV 953

EXDIS (HANDLE AS NODIS)

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM ATHERTON
JERUSALEM FOR USDEL

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV XF US EG IS
SUBJ: ATHERTON/LEWIS MEETING WITH PM BEGIN -- SAT., JAN 21 --
8:30 PM

REF.: JERUSALEM 197

1. FOLLOWING IS A DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE TWO-HOUR
MEETING AMBASSADOR LEWIS AND I HELD LAST NIGHT WITH
PRIME MINISTER BEGIN, FOREIGN MINISTER DAYAN AND
ATTORNEY GENERAL BARAK. DAYAN'S ASSISTANT, ELLIE
RUBINSTEIN AND DCM VIETS WERE ALSO PRESENT. SEE
JERUSALEM 197 FOR SUMMARY REPORT OF CONVERSATION.

2. BEGIN AND HIS COLLEAGUES WERE LISTENING TO EARLY
RADIO REPORTS OF THE SADAT SPEECH (WHICH WAS STILL IN
PROGRESS) AS WE WERE USHERED INTO THE PRIME MINISTER'S
LIVING ROOM. TO OUR RELIEF BEGIN PROMPTLY SAID THAT
BEFORE REACTING TO THE SPEECH HE WOULD WANT TO STUDY
AND ANALYZE IT CAREFULLY. AFTER A BRIEF EXCHANGE

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ABOUT YOUR WHEREABOUTS AND SOME FRIENDLY JESTING OVER
SAM LEWIS' 1 AM SATURDAY MORNING PHONE CALL TO DAYAN
TO GIVE HIM A PRELIMINARY REPORT ON YOUR MEETING WITH
SADAT, WE QUICKLY GOT DOWN TO BUSINESS.

3. I TOLD BEGIN YOU HAD BEEN ALONE WITH SADAT FOR
ABOUT TWO HOURS AND THAT THE ACCOUNT I WAS ABOUT TO

GIVE HIM WAS BASED ON YOUR RECOUNTING OF THE CON-
VERSATION TO ME. I STRESSED THAT YOU HAD ASKED THAT
I CONVEY TO HIM THE FULL FLAVOR AND DETAILS OF THE
MEETING. NOTING THAT AT THE OUTSET OF THE MEETING
YOU HAD FOUND SADAT IN A MOOD BORDERING ON ANGER, I
SAID THAT WHAT I WAS ABOUT TO RELATE TO HIM MIGHT
MAKE HIM, TOO, ANGRY. BUT WE THOUGHT IT NECESSARY THAT HE
BE FULLY COGNIZANT OF SADAT'S MOOD AND PERCEPTIONS, AND OF
THE PROBLEMS AND IRRITANTS RELATING TO EVENTS OF THE
LAST SEVERAL WEEKS WHICH ARE CURRENTLY PREOCCUPYING
HIM. I THEN GAVE BEGIN A DETAILED REPORT TO WHICH
HE LISTENED WITH GREAT CARE AND ATTENTION.

4. BEGIN INTERRUPTED MY LENGTHY PRESENTATION ONLY
ONCE TO SEEK CLARIFICATION ON WHETHER SADAT THOUGHT
THAT HE HAD CONCEDED TO THE PHRASE "A JUST SOLUTION
OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM" IN PARAGRAPH THREE OF
THE PROPOSED DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES. SINCE I
HAVE REPORTED THE ESSENTIALS OF THIS PORTION OF
THE CONVERSATION IN PARAS. 6 AND 7 OF REFTTEL, I AM
NOT REPEATING THEM HERE.

5. AT THE CONCLUSION OF MY REPORT I SAID YOU HAD
ASKED ME TO EXPRESS YOUR STRONG HOPE THAT BEGIN WOULD
AGREE:

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A. TO SEND WEIZMAN BACK TO THE CAIRO TALKS SINCE
IT WAS THE ONE VENUE FOR NOW WHERE A DIRECT DIALOGUE COULD
BE CONTINUED.

B. TO PUT ASIDE FOR THE TIME BEING DISCUSSIONS
OF THE SINAI SETTLEMENTS ISSUE IN THE MILITARY COMMITTEE
AND TO FOCUS ON OTHER QUESTIONS SUCH AS BUFFER ZONES,
DEPLOYMENTS, AIR FIELDS, ETC. I SAID IT IS CLEAR THAT
SADAT AT THIS STAGE IS NOT PREPARED TO DISCUSS FURTHER
THE MATTER OF SINAI SETTLEMENTS.

C. TO AVOID ANY NEW SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY OF ANY
KIND IN THE SINAI.

6. BEGIN THANKED ME WARMLY FOR THE "IMPORTANT
INFORMATION" YOU HAD ASKED BE CONVEYED TO HIM.
HE SAID HE WISHED TO RESPOND TO SEVERAL POINTS.
FIRST, HE ASKED RHETORICALLY "WHAT IS THE CHARACTER
OF THIS MAN SADAT?". HE THOUGHT IT CRITICAL TO SEEK
AN ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION SINCE SADAT IS ONE OF THE
DECISIVE FACTORS IN THE SITUATION. BEGIN SAID THAT
DURING SADAT'S VISIT TO JERUSALEM HE HAD TALKED
WITH HIM ALONE MORE THAN TWO HOURS. SADAT'S LAST
WORDS WERE "YOU ARE MY FRIEND". BEGIN RELATED HOW

SUBSEQUENTLY HE HAD TOLD YADIN AND SOME OF HIS OTHER ASSOCIATES "MY FRIENDS, HE IS A CURIOUS MAN. HE CAN DO GOOD THINGS...OR OTHERWISE." IN RETROSPECT THIS APPEARED TO HIM TO BE AN APT DESCRIPTION OF SADAT.

7. THE PRIME MINISTER THEN DISCURSED AT LENGTH ON WHAT SEEMED TO HIM TO BE A MARKED LACK OF STABILITY IN SADAT'S RECENT PERFORMANCE. HE WAS ESPECIALLY CONCERNED OVER SADAT'S PENCHANT FOR MAKING VERBAL AGREEMENTS AND THEN LATER, UPON ADVICE OF HIS ADVISERS, REVERSING HIMSELF. HE CITED AS AN EXAMPLE THE DEMILITARIZATION OF SINAI. IN JERUSALEM SADAT HAD AGREED ON THE SPOT NOT TO PERMIT ANY EGYPTIAN FORCES EAST OF THE SINAI PASSES. BEGIN HAD BEEN
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ECSTATIC OVER THE STATESMANSHIP SADAT HAD DEMONSTRATED IN REACHING THIS DECISION. AND IN ISMAILIA WHEN

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AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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EXDIS (HANDLE AS NODIS)

THE SUBJECT CAME UP SADAT HAD SAID NOTHING TO INDICATE ANY CHANGE OF MIND. NOR 48 HOURS LATER WHEN THE ISRAELIS HAD COMMUNICATED TO THE GOE THROUGH OUR EMBASSIES THE ISRAELI PLAN WHICH STARTED "BASED ON PROMISES MADE IN JERUSALEM", ONCE AGAIN NOT A WORD

HAD BEEN SAID. IT WAS ONLY WHEN WEIZMAN AND GAMASY FIRST MET IN GIANACLIS AND GAMASY HANDED OVER A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PLAN THAT BEGIN HAD REALIZED SOMETHING HAD GONE WRONG. HE QUOTED WEIZMAN AS HAVING REMINDED SADAT OF HIS COMMITMENT TO BEGIN IN JERUSALEM AND HOW GAMASY HAD INTERRUPTED TO SAY THAT SADAT WAS NOT A MILITARY MAN AND THEREFORE HIS COMMITMENTS ON THE ISSUE WERE NOT RELEVANT. BEGIN SAID THIS EPISODE HAD BADLY SHAKEN HIS FAITH IN SADAT'S STEADFASTNESS.

8. HE CONTINUED HIS CATALOGUE OF SADAT'S CAPRICIOUS ACTS BY RELATING VARIOUS COMMENTS SADAT HAD MADE WHICH HE HAD INTERPRETED AS IMPLYING BLESSING TO HIS PLAN FOR RETENTION OF SETTLEMENTS IN THE SINAI. HE SAID THROUGHOUT HIS TALKS WITH SADAT BOTH IN JERUSALEM AND ISMAILIA NOT ONCE HAD SADAT UTTERED ONE WORD OF CAUTION OR CRITICISM AGAINST THE MAINTENANCE OF ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN THE SINAI. IN FAIRNESS,
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HE SAID, SADAT HAD STATED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE ISMAILIA MEETING THAT THERE WERE CERTAIN AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PARTIES, AND PERHAPS IN RETROSPECT HE HAD MEANT SETTLEMENTS AS ONE OF THE PROBLEMS. BUT THE FACT REMAINED THAT AT NO TIME HAD SADAT MADE SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE ISSUE NOR HAD HE "SAID ONE WORD OF REJECTION".

9. BEGIN THEN TURNED TO THE DEVELOPMENTS LEADING UP TO SADAT'S WITHDRAWAL OF THE EGYPTIAN DELEGATION FROM THE JERUSALEM POLITICAL TALKS. HE SAID THAT FONMIN KAMEL HAD CONFESSED TO HIM HIS TOTAL SURPRISE OVER SADAT'S DECISION DURING HIS FAREWELL CALL. BEGIN SAID KAMEL HAD MADE CLEAR DURING THEIR FINAL TALK THAT IN THE EGYPTIAN VIEW THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN CONVENED IN JERUSALEM. IT WAS AN ARM OF THE CAIRO CONFERENCE AND, ACCORDING TO KAMEL, SADAT NOW WAS INSISTING THAT ANY FURTHER TALKS BE IN CAIRO. BEGIN RUEFULLY RECALLED THAT WHEN HE HAD FIRST TOLD SAM LEWIS OF HIS PLAN TO PROPOSE THAT A MILITARY COMMITTEE BE CONVENED IN CAIRO AND A POLITICAL COMMITTEE IN JERUSALEM, SAM HAD OFFERED THE PERSONAL OBSERVATION THAT HE DOUBTED IF SADAT WOULD AGREE. IN RETROSPECT, BEGIN SAID, SAM HAD UNDERSTOOD SADAT BETTER THAN HE. IT WAS CLEAR THAT SADAT AND HIS ADVISERS HAD MISGIVINGS ABOUT SENDING A DELEGATION TO JERUSALEM FROM THE VERY BEGINNING. EVEN SO, BEGIN FOUND SADAT'S DECISION TO RECALL HIS DELEGATION TO BE "AN IRRATIONAL ACT". HE SAID SADAT, JUDGING FROM PRELIMINARY REPORTS OF HIS PEOPLES' ASSEMBLY SPEECH,

WAS UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT NOVEMBER 19 REPRESENTS
A NEW ERA IN THE WORLD'S HISTORY. THIS HAS LED HIM TO
BELIEVE THAT ISRAEL IS GOING TO GIVE IN ON WHATEVER
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HE ASKS. OTHERWISE, THERE WILL BE NO PEACE. HE MUST
KNOW THAT ISRAEL CANNOT GO BACK EVERYWHERE TO THE
1967 LINES. HE HAD TOLD SADAT IN ISMAILIA THAT THIS
WOULD BE "ABSOLUTELY INCONCEIVABLE" AND THAT THE ISRAELIS
WERE NOT COMMITTED TO DO SO UNDER 242.

10. BEGIN SAID HE HAS CONCLUDED THAT "SADAT IS NOT A
RATIONAL MAN." HE IS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF "LEARNED
ADVISERS" BECAUSE HE DOESN'T BOTHER TO STUDY THE DETAILS
ON ANY ISSUE. MEMBERS OF THE EGYPTIAN DELEGATION HAD
TOLD MFA LEGAL ADVISOR ROSENNE THAT THEY HAD TO "PROTECT
OUR PRESIDENT BECAUSE YOUR PRIME MINISTER IS A LAWYER
AND OURS IS NOT." BEGIN ASKED WHAT IS ONE TO CONCLUDE
FROM ALL OF THIS. ONE THING SEEMS CLEAR. SADAT IS
VERY WORRIED ABOUT THE REJECTIONIST FRONT. KAMEL HAD
TOLD HIM SO QUITE DIRECTLY PRIOR TO HIS RETURN TO
CAIRO. BEGIN SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THIS BUT HE WAS AT A
LOSS TO KNOW WHAT ISRAEL COULD DO ABOUT IT. HE COULD
NOT "WOUND OUR PEOPLE" IN ORDER TO SAVE SADAT FROM
HIMSELF.

11. BEGIN THEN LAUNCHED INTO A LONG, REFLECTIVE AND
I THOUGHT QUITE TEMPERATE ANALYSIS OF THE WAR OF WORDS
WAGED BETWEEN CAIRO AND TEL AVIV IN RECENT DAYS.
PREDICTABLY, HE FEELS HE IS THE INJURED PARTY AND THAT
IN THE FACE OF CONTINUING PROVOCATIONS FROM SADAT AND
FROM THE EGYPTIAN PRESS, HE HAS BEEN REMARKABLY
RESTRAINED.

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AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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EXDIS (HANDLE AS NODIS)

12. HAVING FINALLY PURGED HIMSELF OF THESE VARIOUS CONCERNS HE TURNED TO THE THREE PROBLEMS I HAD TOLD HIM YOU HOPED HE WOULD GIVE HIS AGREEMENT TO. HE SAID HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES WOULD STUDY SADAT'S SPEECH VERY CAREFULLY OVER NIGHT BEFORE TAKING ANY DECISION ON WHETHER TO SEND WEIZMAN BACK TO CAIRO. HE DID NOT WISH TO GO INTO ANY DETAILS NOW, BUT HE WOULD TELEPHONE AMBASSADOR LEWIS AS SOON AS THE CABINET MEETING ENDED AND INFORM HIM OF THE DECISION. ON THE MATTER OF CONTINUING WORK ON THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, HE SAID HE WOULD BRING THIS SUBJECT BEFORE THE CABINET IN ITS MEETING TODAY (JAN 22). BECAUSE THE CABINET HAD ALREADY DECIDED THAT THE ISRAELIS SHOULD NOT UNDERTAKE NEGOTIATIONS OUTSIDE THE FRAMEWORK OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE, HE SAID IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO GAIN NEW APPROVAL TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATIONS USING OUR GOOD OFFICES.

13. ON THE MATTER OF SETTLEMENTS, HE SAID IT WAS NOT IN ISRAEL'S INTEREST TO EXACERBATE THE SITUATION. HE AGREED THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO CALM THE ATMOSPHERE. BUT HOW DOES ONE ACCOMPLISH THAT AFTER SADAT HAS JUST SPOKEN FOR TWO HOURS MISINTERPRETING MUCH OF WHAT HE, BEGIN, AND HIS GOVERNMENT HAS SAID AND DONE IN THE PAST
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WEEKS. HE THOUGHT THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE A DEBATE IN THE KNESSET ON SADAT'S SPEECH. SEVERAL MOTIONS TO THIS EFFECT HAD ALREADY BEEN TABLED EVEN PRIOR TO THE SPEECH. HE WOULD HAVE TO MAKE A STATEMENT BEFORE WEDNESDAY IN RESPONSE TO THESE MOTIONS. HE THOUGHT PROBABLY THIS WOULD TAKE PLACE ON MONDAY, TO BE FOLLOWED BY A FULL DRESS DEBATE.

14. AT THIS POINT DAYAN INTERVENED FOR THE FIRST TIME. HE ASKED WHICH ELEMENTS OF YOUR CONVERSATION WITH SADAT SHOULD BE KEPT SECRET FROM THE CABINET. FOR EXAMPLE, IF THE CABINET WERE TO BE APPRISED OF THE POSSIBILITY OF BEGINNING WORK ON A DRAFT PEACE TREATY, IN ALL LIKELIHOOD IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO REPORT THIS TO THE KNESSET FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE. INEVITABLY, NEWS OF THIS WOULD LEAK TO THE PRESS.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THE FACT THAT SADAT IS PREPARED TO GO FORWARD WITH MEETINGS OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE IS NO LONGER SECRET. THEREFORE, HE ASSUMED WE HAD NO PROBLEM IN THE CABINET BEING FULLY BRIEFED ON YOUR DISCUSSION WITH SADAT ON THIS MATTER. FINALLY, HE ASKED HOW WE WOULD PREFER HANDLING THE SUBJECT OF FURTHER NEGOTIATION ON THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES. I SAID I THOUGHT THAT, BEYOND REFERRING TO CONTINUATION OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE, IT BEST SIMPLY TO STICK FOR THE MOMENT WITH A GENERAL FORMULATION TO THE EFFECT THAT SADAT WISHES TO PROCEED WITH THE PEACE PROCESS. DAYAN ASKED IF WE WOULD HAVE ANY OBJECTION IF THE CABINET WERE TOLD THAT YOU ARE SUGGESTING THE COMPLETION OF WORK ON THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES AND HAVE VOLUNTEERED US GOOD OFFICES TO THIS END. SADAT HAS NOT REJECTED THIS PROPOSAL AND THE GOI HOPES THAT THIS WILL BE POSSIBLE. IN CONCURRING IN THIS
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FORMULATION.

15. TURNING TO THE POSSIBILITY OF STARTING WORK ON A DRAFT PEACE TREATY, BEGIN SAID HE FOUND THIS A SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT. HE SUGGESTED THAT A SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE COULD BE ESTABLISHED TO BEGIN WORK. HE ASKED IF WE HAD ANY OBJECTION TO DISCUSSING THIS IN TODAY'S CABINET SESSION. I SAID I THOUGHT IT WAS PREMATURE TO DISCUSS THE SUBJECT IN ANY WAY BECAUSE OF THE HIGH RISK OF IT BECOMING PUBLIC. I SAID SADAT HAD RAISED THE IDEA WITH YOU IN THE MANNER OF "THINKING OUT LOUD" AND THAT IT IN NO WAY REPRESENTED A FIRM PROPOSAL ON HIS PART. IT SEEMED TO ME THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS SHOULD FIRST BE THAT WE FINISH WORK ON THE DECLARATION. IF WE WERE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS THERE MIGHT BE MORE RECEPTIVITY ON SADAT'S PART TO FIND A MEANS TO RESUME EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI CONTACTS ON A PEACE TREATY. IN THE MEANWHILE, IF THERE WERE PREMATURE PUBLICITY, IT MIGHT KILL THE IDEA SINCE IT COULD BE INTERPRETED BY SADAT'S CRITICS AS EVIDENCE THAT HE WAS BACKING DOWN FROM HIS SUSPENSION OF PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE. I SAID THAT SADAT WHILE AGREEING IN PRINCIPLE TO CONTINUE WORK ON THE DECLARATION, HAD ALSO SAID HE WANTED TO REFLECT FURTHER ON THIS BEFORE TAKING A DECISION. BEGIN THEN AGREED THAT NEITHER TEXT OF DRAFT DECLARATION NOR IDEA OF WORKING ON A DRAFT TREATY WOULD BE DISCUSSED IN TODAY'S CABINET MEETING.

16. DAYAN AGAIN INTERVENED TO SAY HE HAD LISTENED TO THE DISCUSSION WITH GREAT INTEREST. IT LED HIM

TO WONDER JUST WHERE WE WERE GOING AND HOW WE
INTENDED TO GET THERE. IT SEEMED TO HIM THAT THERE
WAS A NEED FOR A REVIEW OF OUR GENERAL STRATEGY.
FOR EXAMPLE, SADAT HAD SAID FROM THE OUTSET THAT IF
WE COULD GET A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, THEN HUSSEIN
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WOULD JOIN THE TALKS. DOES THIS STILL STAND? PICKING
UP ON SOME OF BEGIN'S EARLIER COMMENTS, HE SAID IT
WAS BECOMING DIFFICULT TO KEEP UP WITH SADAT'S ERRATIC
CHANGES IN MOOD AND POLICY. AT THE OUTSET, FOR
EXAMPLE, SADAT HAD SAID HE DID NOT WANT TO DISCUSS
THE SYRIAN FRONT. TUHAMI HAD MADE THIS VERY CLEAR
WHEN DAYAN HAD GIVEN HIM THE FULL DETAILS OF THE
BEGIN PLAN PRIOR TO THE ISMAILIA SUMMIT. NOW, SADAT
IS SAYING THAT GOLAN COMES BEFORE SINAI. DAYAN FOUND
ALL THIS VERY CONFUSING. I RESPONDED THAT SADAT HAD
NOT MENTIONED SYRIA ONCE DURING HIS CONVERSATION
WITH YOU. THUS, I COULD NOT GIVE HIM ANY DEFINITIVE
ANSWER AS TO WHAT SADAT HAD IN MIND RELATING TO SYRIA.

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EXDIS (HANDLE AS NODIS)

17. AMBASSADOR LEWIS THEN TURNED THE SUBJECT BACK
TO SINAI SETTLEMENTS AND OUR STRONG HOPE THAT NOTHING
WOULD TAKE PLACE IN THE COMING WEEKS TO INFLAME
FURTHER THIS PROBLEM. IN COMMENTING ON BEGIN'S EARLIER

REMARKS THAT NO ONCE HAD SADAT TOLD HIM HE COULD NOT LIVE WITH ANY JEWISH SETTLEMENTS IN THE SINAI, SAM SAID HE THOUGHT IT ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT SADAT HONESTLY BELIEVED AT THE BEGINNING THAT HE COULD WORK OUT AN ARRANGEMENT ON SETTLEMENTS. BUT AS THE PRESSURES ON SADAT INCREASED AND AS HE SAW MORE CLEARLY THE POLITICAL EFFECTS ON HIS POSITION, HE HAD BEEN FORCED TO CHANGE HIS COURSE. BEGIN INTERRUPTED TO RECALL THAT EZER HAD CALLED HIM FROM CAIRO AT THE BEHEST OF SADAT TO ASK WHETHER IN FACT ISRAEL HAD DECIDED TO CONSTRUCT NEW SETTLEMENTS IN THE SINAI. THE ANSWER, OF COURSE, HAD BEEN NO. THE ONLY DECISION TAKEN HAD BEEN TO ENLARGE SOME OF THE SETTLEMENTS ALREADY IN BEING. BEGIN THEN WENT ON TO CASTIGATE THE ISRAELI PRESS FOR THE DISTORTED MANNER IN WHICH IT HAD HANDLED THIS VERY SENSITIVE SUBJECT. HE SAID A PRESS TRIBUNAL HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED AND HAD CONDEMNED CERTAIN MEMBERS OF ISRAELI TV FOR THEIR PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT IN HANDLING THIS STORY. SAM POINTED OUT THAT

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WHATEVER THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS IN THE PAST, THE ONE CLEAR THING NOW IS THAT THIS WAS A "TENDER BOIL" AND THAT ANY FURTHER ACTIVITY OR ANY FURTHER PUBLICITY WOULD RESULT IN GREATLY COMPLICATING THE ISSUE WITH SADAT. BEGIN REPEATED THAT HE IS NOT GOING TO ESTABLISH ANY NEW SETTLEMENTS. BUT HE ASKED, SOMEWHAT PLAINTIVELY, WHAT WAS WRONG WITH ENLARGING THE PRESENT ONES? THIS HAD BEEN NECESSARY IN ORDER TO BUCK UP THE MORALE OF THE SETTLERS. ALTHOUGH THEY KNEW THEY WOULD NOT BE LEFT IN A LURCH, ALL THE SAME THEY WERE VERY WORRIED. BUT, BEGIN CONTINUED, THERE WAS ONE THING WE SHOULD FULLY UNDERSTAND. THERE IS NO GOVERNMENT IN ISRAEL THAT COULD SURVIVE A DECISION TO DISMANTLE THE SETTLEMENTS. IT WOULD PROMPTLY BE VOTED OUT OF OFFICE. I SAID THIS ONLY UNDERSCORES YOUR VIEW THAT AT LEAST FOR THE PRESENT THE MATTER SHOULD NOT BE DISCUSSED FURTHER IN THE MILITARY COMMITTEE. BEGIN ANSWERED THAT THIS WAS ALSO CALLAGHAN'S VIEW. HE HAD WRITTEN HIM "LET'S PUT IT ON THE BACK BURNER" AND THAT PROBABLY WAS A GOOD DESCRIPTION OF WHERE IT OUGHT TO BE. DAYAN BROKE IN TO OBSERVE THAT WHILE THE MILITARY COMMITTEE CAN PERHAPS AVOID DISCUSSING THE SETTLEMENTS ISSUE, IT CERTAINLY COULD NOT AVOID TALKING ABOUT SHARM-EL-SHEIK. AT THAT POINT ONE WOULD HAVE TO DISCUSS THE STATUS OF THE CIVILIANS LIVING THERE. THIS BROUGHT HIM BACK TO HIS BASIC PROBLEM WITH SADAT. IF YOU TALK TO HIM IN A BUSINESS-LIKE MANNER, IT DOESN'T GET YOU ANYWHERE. AND IF YOU AVOID CONTENTIOUS ISSUES, THEN SADAT SUBSEQUENTLY SAYS THAT YOU NEVER

MENTIONED THE MATTER AND THEREFORE HE DID WHAT HE
FELT HE HAD TO. ALL THIS LEADS INEVITABLY TO A
VICIOUS CIRCLE OF MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND CONFUSION.

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18. THE PRIME MINISTER BROUGHT THE MEETING TO AN END
BY STATING THAT HE WOULD RECOMMEND TO THE CABINET
THAT ISRAEL SHOULD CONTINUE NEGOTIATING ON A DECLARATION
OF PRINCIPLES USING AMERICAN GOOD OFFICES. TURNING TO
DAYAN, HE ASKED IF HE CONCURRED. DAYAN DID. BUT, BEGIN
ENDED, "WE MUST NOT GIVE UP THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE
BECAUSE OF THIS INDISCRIMINATE ATTEMPT TO DICTATE
EVERYTHING TO US." IT WAS WHIMSICAL OF SADAT TO CALL
HOME HIS FOREIGN MINISTER. IT WAS EQUALLY WHIMSICAL
OF SADAT TO THINK THAT HE CAN VERBALLY ATTACK THE
ISRAELIS AT ANY TIME HE PLEASES, AND THAT THE ISRAELIS
ARE SUPPOSED TO REMAIN SILENT. ALL THE SAME, HE SAID,
WE MUST PERSEVERE IN OUR EFFORTS TOWARD KEEPING THE
PEACE PROCESS MOVING AHEAD. LEWIS

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